

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 9, with the following amended paragraph:

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Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 22, line 23, with the following amended paragraph:

As shown in FIG. 1, a lighting device (electronic ballast) for a discharge lamp (high-pressure discharge lamp), according to a first embodiment of the present invention, has the same fundamental configuration as that of the conventional device 2 illustrated in FIG. 25. Specifically, the lighting device according to the first embodiment includes a rectification circuit 1 for full-wave rectifying a voltage from an AC power supply AC which is a commercial power supply, a step-up chopper circuit 2 for converting a pulsating voltage rectified through the rectification circuit 1 into a desired DC voltage, a step-down chopper circuit 3 for stepping down an output DC voltage from the step-up chopper circuit 2, a polarity reversing circuit 5 for alternating an output DC voltage from the step-down chopper circuit 3 at a low frequency of several ten to several hundred Hz to apply a rectangular-wave voltage to a discharge lamp 4 (high-pressure discharge lamp), and an igniter circuit 31 for applying start-up high-voltage pulses to the discharge lamp 4. In view of avoiding redundant descriptions, descriptions about the common components with those of the conventional device 2 will be omitted.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 29, line 10, with the following amended paragraph:

The timer 29 starts counting the restart time T3 simultaneously with initiation of the counting of the operation-enabling time T1. Then, if the discrimination signal to be output from the turn on detection circuit 26a in response to start-up of the discharge lamp 4 is not turned within the period of the restart time T₃ T₂, for example, if the discharge lamp 4 does not start up because it is in the last phase of its life duration or the discharge lamp 4 is not attached to a socket (no-load state), the output of the rectangular pulse is stopped. Consequently, the second control circuit 26 operates to deactivate the step-down chopper circuit 3 and the polarity reversing circuit 5. Thus, the output of the high-voltage pulses from the igniter circuit 31 is also stopped.